

Regional AGENDA

METROPOLITAN KING COUNTY COUNCIL

May-June 2000

Sullivan: 'Comprehensive Plan update one of the most significant items before council this year'



Councilwoman Sullivan chairs the Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee

Metropolitan King County Councilmember Cynthia Sullivan predicts the upcoming revision of the county's long-term growth plan won't be easy, won't be quick, but will produce important changes that impact every King County resident whether they live in a city or on a farm.

"The Comprehensive Plan update is one of the most significant legislative items to come before the council this year," said Sullivan

who chairs the Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee. "Not only is it the county's long-term vision for how and where growth should occur, but it is also a way to fix the things that are not working."

The King County Comprehensive Plan is a long-range guide to growth that must be consistent with the Washington State

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King County Council takes next step in 'e-government' offers live Internet audio of meetings

A new Internet website unveiled by the council provides access in an instant, by allowing citizens to hear council and committee meetings live from their home or business computers.


With the innovation, King County is one of the first local governments in the nation to open its meetings for live broadcast on the World Wide Web. The site can be found at www.metrokc.gov/mkcc/.

"This technology allows King County to communicate more effectively with citizens and other elected officials," said Council Chair Pete von Reichbauer. "How better to meet the increasingly complicated needs of this region than to be

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Council travels into the community

Every month, the Committee-of-the-Whole – a working committee comprised of all councilmembers – is holding a meeting away from the downtown Seattle courthouse and listening to the opinions of the public.  See page 3

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Sullivan: 'Comprehensive Plan

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tions are made annually to the plan, but this year the council will carry out the first major revision of the plan since its adoption in 1994. The county code requires a complete review of the plan every fourth year, starting in 2000.

Sullivan said some of the major issues to be considered in the 2000 update include:

- Preserving rural lands;
- Creating incentives for new development in already urbanized areas;
- Improving traffic flow throughout the region;
- Protecting salmon habitat and other environmentally fragile areas; and
- Increasing the availability of affordable housing.



Questions regarding the Comprehensive Plan can be left on the council's telephone hotline, (206) 205-2870. The website link will be available starting March 29 at: www.metrokc.gov/mkcc.

The process begins in the Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee, which will coordinate an in-depth review of the draft update starting in March and continuing through July. This review will also involve several of the council's standing committees. The full council is scheduled to review committee recommendations and vote on a finalized update during September and November of this year.

"Public participation and input is critical to responding to changing conditions and new considerations involving how growth occurs throughout King County," said Sullivan.

"We are structuring this review process to include several meetings out in the community, forums with Unincorporated Area Councils, a dozen public hearings, and creating the technology to allow for online testimony via the county council's website. There is no excuse not to get involved."

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Comprehensive Plan 2000 Update Meeting Schedule

April 4

Regular meeting of the Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee (GMUAC) at 9:30 a.m. in council chambers.

April 10

GMUAC public hearing - McMurray Middle School, Vashon, 7-9 p.m.

April 11

GMUAC public hearing - Northshore Senior Center, Bothell, 7-9 p.m.

April 13

GMUAC public hearing - Black Diamond Community Center, 7-9 p.m.

April 17

GMUAC public hearing - Chief Kanim Middle School, Fall City, 7-9 p.m.

April 18

GMUAC public hearing - council chambers, 7-9 p.m.

April 25

Regular meeting of the GMUAC, council chambers, 9:30 a.m.

May 2

Regular meeting of the GMUAC, council chambers, 9:30 a.m.

May 16

Regular meeting of the GMUAC, council chambers, 9:30 a.m.

May 23

Regular meeting of the GMUAC, council chambers, 9:30 a.m.

** Public testimony will be taken at all of these meetings, and on the council's website, **www.metrokc.gov/mkcc**.*

County Council: offers live Internet audio

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accessible around the clock?”

The new “e-government” site uses Real Audio to provide the sound. Citizens can download a free copy of the RealPlayer 7 basic, also available on the site, to allow them instant access to their local government. The website also provides citizens with:

- Online video of various government programs and projects. For example, residents can view the council’s “Salmon Update,” a short video detailing the latest information on the region’s fight to save the endangered chinook salmon;
- Access to critical information about local government services that affect them directly, including council and committee meeting agendas, county code, audits, recently proposed legislation, and a link to the county’s Civic Television station CTV; and,
- A direct line to county services via the web. Residents can now go to the council’s website to sign up for an absentee ballot, animal license, research properties, or get the latest traffic information.

At times, the site will also feature e-testimony, allowing citizens to enter official public testimony via the web on important topics such as the King County budget and county comprehensive growth management plan.

Councilmember Greg Nickels, former chair of the council’s budget committee introduced “Cyber democracy” during the council’s budget process two years ago. The e-testimony feature was another first across the nation.

“It became so popular, that the council will take e-testimony during the upcoming review of the county’s comprehensive growth

management plan,” said Nickels.

Councilmember Jane Hague said King County is way ahead of the digital curve.

“We can do more than just surf the web – we can use the Internet as a valuable tool to complete critical transactions with local government,” said Hague, who is currently serving as president-elect of the National Association of Counties (NACo), where she has championed improved public access to local government. “With this innovation, we have effectively taken the courthouse out of downtown Seattle and moved it into every neighborhood in the county.”

Hague and Councilmember David Irons, who chairs the council’s new Utilities and Technology Committee, also hope to be able to add an option for residents to make e-payments on the site in the very near future. Some of the fees that could be paid for electronically include, court fines, transit passes, document copying and some services in public health clinics. A measure to allow the county to accept electronic payments for fees and services is currently under review by the utilities committee.

“The information superhighway is a two-way street,” said Irons. “By improving public access via the web, the council is fostering a more civic-minded attitude from citizens. Citizens who are listening can actually weigh-in to a debate by sending their councilmember an e-mail during the discussion. That’s the power of e-government.”

The council hopes to add more video streaming capability, and provide citizens with the ability to track legislation through King County government sometime this year.



Council members Jane Hague (left), Greg Nickels (center) and Council Chair Pete von Reichbauer discuss the advantages of e-government.

Council travels into the community

Under the leadership of Chair Pete von Reichbauer, the county council is traveling into the community at least once a month to make a more direct connection with citizens.

Every month, the Committee-of-the-Whole is holding a meeting away from the downtown Seattle courthouse. The first two meetings were held in Des Moines and Issaquah, and both focused on transportation issues.

"It is time that the King County Council gets out of the courthouse and into our communities," said von Reichbauer. "One of my goals as chair of the county council is to re-establish a dialogue with cities and citizens about common issues. We chose transportation as our first focus because it is a critical concern for all of us who live and work here."

The first two meetings were well attended. At Highline Community College, residents were very concerned about cuts in bus service following the passage of Initiative 695. In Issaquah, community members and business leaders asked the council to continue providing key transit service and keep working with the city to ease congestion in the area.

"By taking the council's meetings on the road, we are getting real insight into the issues that matter the most to the people who have to deal with them every day," said von Reichbauer.

"What better place to discuss transportation than Issaquah, which is ground zero as far as traffic congestion is concerned?"

The council's off-site meetings continue with a forum with labor leaders in April and a trip to the Shoreline area in May. If your community would like to host the Committee-of-the-Whole, please contact council staffers Mike Alvine at (206) 296-0350 or Nancy Laswell at (206) 296-0345.

"I hope these meetings will help us build an open and positive dialogue with residents and elected officials around the county," said von Reichbauer.

"Together, we can be much more effective in solving the region's problems."



Councilmembers recently held a Committee-of-the-Whole meeting at Highline Community College.

What's happening

■ Council votes on HOV lane opening

By a vote of 6-5, the Metropolitan King County Council approved a measure that calls on the state to open some High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to all drivers during non-peak hours.

According to Councilmember Chris Vance, who sponsored the measure, the state should use all means possible to reduce traffic gridlock on the region's highways. He pointed to a recent Washington State Transportation Center (TRAC) study, which indicated that unrestricted use of HOV lanes during off-peak hours could reduce congestion on some highways.

"We have the resources to reduce congestion right now. Not using those resources is a waste of taxpayer money. We owe it to commuters to exhaust all of our options," said Vance, who chairs the council's Transportation Committee.

Councilmembers who opposed the

measure argue opening the HOV lanes to all drivers will do more harm than good.

"As our region grapples with the worst congestion in the nation, it is not time to sacrifice long-term commitments for short-term gain," said Councilmember Maggi Fimia, chair of the council's Regional Transit Committee.

■ Coordinating WWI memorial

An effort to restore a unique World War I memorial in South King County is being coordinated by the Metropolitan King County Council.

The council recently approved an agreement to restore Des Moines Memorial Drive, the only memorial of its kind in the United States, together with four South King County cities.

"It's time that this region take on the responsibility of restoring and maintaining this

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County Arts Commission wins national award, as council reauthorizes annual plan for public art

King County has long been recognized as a national leader in the arts. Recently, the county's arts commission won another accolade and a \$500 grant when the National Association of Counties (NACo) named the King County Performance

Network as the winner of the second annual NACo Arts and Culture Award.

The King County Performance Network was established in 1997 to bring performing artists to suburban and rural communities

throughout King County. With an initial emphasis on contemporary dance, the network has been instrumental in introducing new audiences to contemporary performances.

"Our investment in cultural programs nurtures the spirit of a community," said Metropolitan King County Councilmember Jane Hague, who is the president-elect of NACo. "The arts contribute so much to the vitality of our region. The performance network ensures that all citizens have the opportunity to experience the work of our creative community."

The performance network is just one piece of King County's overall commitment to the arts. At the beginning of the year, the council unanimously approved the annual arts program.

"The 2000 King County Public Art Program Annual Plan continues to build on the incredible success we've had in bringing public art to our region," said Councilmember Larry Phillips. "The projects and programs we emphasize strong partnerships between the county and artists that result in innovative works for everyone to enjoy."

What's happening

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historic memorial," said Councilmember Chris Vance, who was integral in starting the restoration effort. "A signed agreement will ensure its revitalization."

The eight-mile stretch of road winds through four jurisdictions – King County, SeaTac, Burien and Des Moines. The original plan called for the entire memorial roadway to be lined with 1,000 to 2,600 elm trees. The first trees were planted in a grand ceremony on Armistice Day in 1921. Eventually, about 1,800 trees were planted along the roadway. Today only 300 of the original trees remain, after suffering through years of disease and overpruning.

A local group of elected, business, and community leaders, unveiled restoration plans last summer. The group will replant 1,800 trees, of a variety other than elm, along the roadway. Additional restoration plans include informational signage, plus road and sidewalk improvements to ease access to the memorial.

■ Citizens have new complaint hotline

Councilmember Jane Hague and County Executive Ron Sims recently announced a new citizen complaint hotline that will allow Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) staff to react to serious environmental violations during off hours.

Hague, who called for the hotline as Budget Chair in 1999, said the 24-hour phone line will help respond to damage that, if not immediately repaired, will have long-term impacts on the environment. She cited the example of someone cutting a tree in a sensitive area over the weekend. By the time the work is complete, little can be done to restore the damage.

Via the hotline, around-the-clock environmental expertise will be available to respond to citizen complaints regarding the most serious environmental hazards, such as illegal clearing and grading or lack of proper erosion control measures. The hotline, 1-(888)-437-4771, was activated March 16.

Calls to the hotline are routed to an existing 24-hour Roads Division phone center, then dispatched to DDES staff to respond on site if the situation warrants immediate action.

"This new service not only gives our natural environment a new ally, but it creates an opportunity for long-term savings by tackling problems as they occur, rather than waiting for more major environmental problems to arise", said Hague.



Councilmember Jane Hague (center) presents an award from the National Association of Counties to the King County Performance Network. From left: Dale Merrill, artistic director of the Spectrum Dance Theater; Michael Killoren, executive director of the King County Arts Commission; Ronda Simons, cultural programs manager for the city of Kent; Hague; Steve Lerian, director of the Kirkland Performing Arts Center; and Jim Kelly, manager of the King County Office of Cultural Resources.

What we're doing . . .



Every year, the Metropolitan King County Council awards surplus vehicles from its Vanpool program to deserving non-profit agencies. Councilmembers Louise Miller and Maggi Fimia delivered two vans to Lake Washington Technical College. The vans will be used to shuttle

students between the vocational campus in Kirkland and Cascadia Community College in Bothell. The vans will also be available for people in the local community who need transportation to Evergreen Hospital for doctor appointments and outpatient services. Attending the ceremony to hand over the keys were, from left: Councilmember Maggi Fimia; Lynn Moody, Hopelink; Cameryn Flynn, Evergreen Healthcare; Mike Metke, Lake Washington Technical College; and Councilmember Louise Miller.

Councilmember Larry Phillips (left), Council Chair Pete von Reichbauer (center), and Councilmember David Irons judged a student art contest sponsored by AK Media. The theme of the contest was



"Keeping our Waterways Clean," and was divided into three separate age groups. The winners of the contest will have their art work displayed on billboards throughout the area.

King County Council approves measure preserving rural lands

King County rural open space will be better protected under a measure approved by the council. The measure allows for developers to construct larger buildings in urban areas in exchange for not building in rural areas.

"We will be creating new housing in urban neighborhoods while preserving our rural landscape at the same time," said Councilmember Larry Phillips, who chairs the council's Natural Resources Committee and was the measure's prime sponsor. "The population in rural areas continues to grow. Establishing development credits will allow us to protect our beautiful Northwest rural landscape in King County from runaway development, without using public funds."

The new measure establishes "development credits." Developers would be allowed to exceed certain building size and height restrictions in urban areas by purchasing "credits." The more credits a developer purchases, the more the developer will be allowed to exceed building restrictions – up to certain established limits.

Half of the revenue generated from the credits will go to improving the immediate urban neighborhood. The other half will go to rural landowners who agree not to construct additional housing on their land.

"The bottom line is, areas willing to take additional density will receive funds for neighborhood improvements, while rural residents will be compensated for keeping their rural land rural," said Phillips.

The information in this newsletter is available in alternate format upon request. Alternate format includes braille, large print, and/or audio. For more information, please call 296-1708, or TDD/TTY at 296-1024.

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Agenda